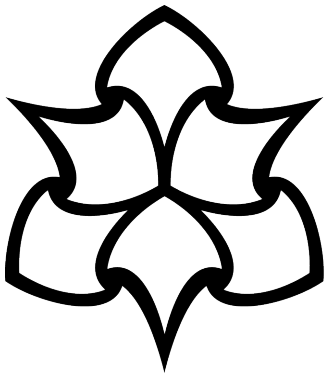

Globalisation and Coloniality of También la lluvia / Even the Rain (2010): Exploring Resistance and Indigenous Empowerment

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This article analyses indigenous practices of resistance and empowerment in the face of neo-imperialism in Icíar Bollaín's film *También la lluvia / Even the Rain* (2010). The film is set in Bolivia during the Water Wars of 1999, when the privatisation of water resulted in violent demonstrations. In the narrative, a transnational film crew arrives in Cochabamba to shoot a film about the violent colonisation of the Americas. This dialogue between what the historical film denounces and what the wider film narrative exposes highlights the unequal distribution of power, income and wealth in contemporary Bolivia. A third filmic experience, a behind-the-scenes documentary, comments on film practices and how cinema is constrained by the financial and creative markets in which it operates. The relationships between the three films problematise truth, authenticity and history. Using Anibal Quijano's notion of coloniality of power and Manuel Castells, Saskia Sassen and Zygmunt Bauman's work on globalisation and human value, this paper investigates how notions of colonialism, coloniality and neo-imperialism are configured within the film. It analyses how the indigenous characters respond to oppression and coloniality through acts of resistance. It also explores thematic elements and notions linked to activism and empowerment which inform a discussion on empathy, nurture and nature.

Keywords: Bolivia, Citizen empowerment, Neo-imperialist contemporary practices, Resistance.

Icíar Bollaín's film *También la lluvia / Even the Rain* (2010) is set in Bolivia during the Water Wars of 1999, when the privatisation of the water supply resulted in violent demonstrations. In the narrative, a transnational film crew arrives in Cochabamba to shoot a film on the colonisation of the Americas. Their historical film aims to expose the violence and abuse of the colonial expansion. However, the crew members choose to ignore the exploitation and neoliberal practices that exist around them and in which they are complicit. This dialogue – between what the historical film condemns and what the wider film

narrative exposes – denounces the unequal distribution of power, income and wealth in contemporary Bolivia. A third filmic experience, a behind-the-scenes documentary shot by a crew member, brings to the screen a metafilmic commentary on the limitations of social film and film practices. On the one hand, the relationships between the three films problematise truth, authenticity and history. On the other hand, their narratives work as mirrors of colonial times, reflecting a temporal continuity of subjugation or "colonialism in its different forms throughout the centuries" (Cilento 2012, 245). In this context, the defiance and resistance of local non-professional actor Daniel (Juan Carlos Aduviri) is positioned in parallel discourse to the traits of the character he portrays in the historical film: Hatuey, the Chief of the Taíno people, who revolted against Columbus. This paper explores how notions of colonialism, coloniality and neo-imperialism are configured in the film, and how the indigenous characters (especially Daniel) respond to oppression and coloniality through acts of resistance. It also explores thematic elements and notions linked to activism and empowerment which inform a discussion on empathy, nurture and nature.

Bollaín's film makes connections between the colonial past and contemporary neoliberal practices, overlapping time and (hi)story to bring them to the attention of the audience. For example, when Antón/Columbus (Karra Elejalde) begins performing during a script-reading session, he removes a waitress's earring and then asks her repeatedly where the gold is as he presents the jewellery to her. An awkward moment follows as the camera takes us from Antón's fierce expression and towering presence to the waiters' silent and uncomfortable smiles. Although in this scene the verbal aggression towards the staff is excused as performance, the superior attitude that provokes it is a constant. For example, it is seen during the dinner scene and when the production team set up a wooden cross. By using the script of the historic film as an intersection between the attitudes of Columbus' crew and those of the film crew, the narrative suggests that little has changed in how the indigenous people of Latin America are treated. Furthermore, the construction of the indigenous people

as subjugated *Other* persists within the hierarchical structures that colonialism and neoliberalism require(d) for their success.

The colonisation of South and Central America has been addressed in Eurocentric discourses as "discovery", ignoring the fact that the land already existed and was inhabited. Furthermore, as Robert Stam (2004, 1) notes, the label "pre-Columbian" involves a patronising understanding of the indigenous culture that is intertwined with religious, social, sexual and racial prejudice. A corresponding disregard for the indigenous experience and history is embodied in the dialogue between the Mexican-born director, Sebastián (Gael García Bernal), the producer, Costa (Luis Tosar) and the documentary filmmaker, María (Cassandra Ciangherotti). In one exchange, the group is discussing authenticity and Sebastián questions Costa about the decision to shoot the film in Bolivia, a mainland country where Columbus never set foot and with a completely different ethnic background. Sebastián's concerns about authenticity and historical sources are a constant and are exemplified by his inclusion of verbatim dialogue from historical letters in the script. This contrasts with Costa's dismissal of the significance of using Quechua people instead of Taíno people, who are located in the Caribbean. Yet, in this same dialogue, it is established that Sebastián's decision to film in Spanish and not in English (which could have provided a bigger budget) is motivated by a desire to use the language that Columbus' crew would have used. Applying authenticity to the Spaniards but not to the locals discards the differences between Quechua and Taíno people as irrelevant and inconsequential. By doing so, the film crew is complicit in dehumanising indigenous people by erasing their particular history, thus displaying "othering of the indigenous population he wants to represent on screen" (Austin 2017, 316).

Eurocentric discourse in the film is not limited to the characters of European (Spanish) origin. Eurocentric thought is "the discursive residue or precipitate of *colonialism*" (Shohat and Stam 2014, 15), so "Europeans can be anti-Eurocentric, just as non-Europeans can be Eurocentric." (ibid, 4) Characters of Latin American origin with privileged, non-indigenous backgrounds are complicit in Eurocentric thinking in hierarchical terms of "us" and "them" (ibid, 2). For

example, the mayor says that the indigenous people, "given their long history of explotaiton" have "mistrust embedded in their genes" and are "very difficult to deal with, when they are also illiterate"; and Sebastián is unable to understand and respect cultural beliefs that prompt the cast to refuse to shoot a scene in which children are drowned. As noted above, Sebastián's historical research for the film involves European accounts and original documents from the conquest. Even though it is established that Sebastián's intentions are partly to emphasise the colonial violence and the indigenous suffering, his only concern during the demonstrations is that the film might be compromised. Although Sebastián expresses an understanding of the protests and appears to be sympathetic to indigenous issues, when these become an obstacle to completing the film he chooses to move the shooting to another location.

Similarly, María appears to be interested in filming the unrest in Cochabamba and even asks Costa for permission to make a documentary about it, but she is one of the first members to leave when things take a turn for the worse. Thus, her desire to film the events may respond not to an urge to broadcast the injustice, but to what Pooja Rangan (2017, 4) calls "immediations", or the "tropes that are mobilized when documentary operates in the mode of emergency". These tropes aim to present the *Other*'s humanity and give a "voice" to the *Other* but in doing so they sustain a structure for what constitutes "human" (2017, 8); this is built on subjectivity but presented within the (incorrectly) assumed neutrality of the documentary form. By including the documentary, Bollaín introduces a reflection on manipulation and storytelling on different levels. First, she makes the audience aware of the selection of images and discarded stories, connecting the production of the historical film to the fabrication of history through Sebastián's selection of texts. Second, Costa instructs María not to film the revolt because it would not make a profit, connecting social cinema and documentary to commercial interests. Third, it highlights the role of the camera-aswitness, which leaves out of the narrative all the events in which the film crew are not involved. It is significant, for example, that the crew learns what is happening through the news media despite some of their extras being

involved in the protests (Cilento 2012, 248). By reflecting on who is telling the story and who has the voice, Bollaín leads the audience to consider issues around hegemonic discourses, having a voice and the commercial concerns of cinema.

Issues related to *which story* is being told and *who* is telling it are deeply related to the postcolonial state, as addressed by Spivak's (1998) influential work *Can the Subaltern Speak?* However, the postcolonial particularities of Latin America differ from those of the postcolonial territories of the British Empire, with which most of the postcolonial scholarship is concerned. Contemporary scholarship on postcolonial Latin America refers instead to *coloniality of power* (Quijano 2000) to explain the remnants of colonial thought that are embedded in Latin American society. Hidden behind ideas of civilisation, progress and salvation, Quijano (ibid, 533-535) elaborates, Eurocentric structures have been maintained and power relationships have been established to sustain the old colonial hierarchies. Coloniality is articulated in a power matrix with four domains: 1). appropriation of land and exploitation of labour; 2). control of authority; 3). control of gender and sexuality (related to notions of the Christian family and connected values); and 4). the control of knowledge and subjectivity (Mignolo 2007, 478). In *También la lluvia,* coloniality is exemplified by the labour conditions of the indigenous extras (payment and health and safety issues), the local government's repression of the activists, the portrayal of the indigenous people as conforming to notions of family and nurture that the Spaniards do not uphold, and the relationship between illiteracy and ethnicity assumed by the mayor.

Disguised as modernity, coloniality has pervaded even after colonialism has ended (Mignolo 2017; Mignolo and Ennis 2001). It is so embedded in society that it cannot be dismantled without destroying the structure supporting modernity and capitalism (Mignolo 2014). Therefore, Mignolo (2007, 458) calls for *delinking* (detaching) colonial thought in order to reconstruct knowledge. This involves "projects of decolonization (political and epistemic) that are, at once, *articulated by the colonized* and yet *not the project of a colonized elite*". Delinking, in this sense, is oppositional to assimilation (2007, 461) and implies an act of resistance.

The process of delinking must start by becoming conscious of the issues of coloniality, understanding the racial structures that sustain it, re-writing history from the perspective of the colonised using their tools and language, and embracing *critical border thinking*: thinking beyond the boundaries of Eurocentric thought (Mignolo 2017). Although *También la lluvia* is not a postcolonial text and the creative team behind it is of (white) European origin, its aims contribute to portraying processes of delinking and resistance. The film itself does not participate in those processes, because it has not been articulated by the colonised and its success (awards, box office or reach) relates primarily to benefits for institutions and individuals from the coloniser countries. As argued by Andrea M. Smith, it adheres to "Feagin's definition of a white racial frame" and "the major theme is the white European attempt at racial understanding" (2017, 317). Nevertheless, certain elements speak of delinking processes and resistance, which are embodied in the character of Daniel/Hatuey.

Coloniality and resistance: Daniel/Hatuey

Daniel is the main antagonist of the historical film (as Hatuey, the Taíno chief who started a revolt against Columbus) and the contemporary film (as the leader of the protests against water privatisation). His image as an activist in the past and in the present implies that indigenous resistance is nothing new. However, whereas Hatuey is burned to death on a pyre, Daniel escapes imprisonment when indigenous extras help him run away. The contrast between these fates is emphasised by the film sequence: as the crew finishes shooting Hatuey's death, the armed police arrive on the film set to arrest Daniel. As Bauman (2004) notes, prisons today are conceived as mechanisms of exclusion and control. Although Daniel is imprisoned earlier after one of the protests, he is temporarily released on bail. Unbeknown to Daniel, however, Costa has agreed to let the authorities arrest him once the filming is complete. Daniel's value is rendered negative at this point, and he becomes one of the "discarded individuals whose value as workers/ consumers is used up and whose relevance as people is ignored" (Castells 1998, 344). This narrative underscores elements of the control of authority and the exploitation

of labour: Daniel is allowed to return to the film set only to complete the work, making labour a condition of freedom. Thus, Daniel is forced to acquire meanings of indigenous labour from Hispanic colonial times. As some of the extras help him get away through the forest, another group overturns the car in which the police arrived, a symbol of modernity and capitalism. This offers an understanding of communal resistance. It also presents a call for action to take control from the authorities, who are presented throughout as being on the side of the multinationals and, therefore, capitalism.

Daniel's acts of resistance confront not only the Bolivian authorities but also the film crew, who symbolise the old colonial order through the themes of their film and the discourses that they have incorporated as source material. The first confrontation takes place in the characters' introduction. As the film opens, the camera takes us through a series of streets in Cochabamba from the point of view of director Sebastián, who is in the passenger seat of a car being driven by Costa. The gaze is that of the director, whose Mexican origin allows us to reflect on the complexities of race and society in Latin America and "remind[s] us of gradations of whiteness within Latin American itself " (Dennison 2013, 193). Furthermore, the casting of Bernal as Sebastián "problematizes his stardom in the film as an ambitious director so absorbed … that he becomes blind to the second invasion" (Cilento 2012, 251).

As Sebastián and Costa approach their destination, the audience is made aware of a long queue of locals waiting for an audition for extras. Faced with the task of having to see everyone in the queue, Costa decides to dismiss all the people who are waiting outside the gates. At this point, Daniel stands out from the crowd by refusing to leave until they have all been seen, as indicated in the call to audition. He embodies resistance in several ways in this scene. First, he displays physical resistance to being dismissed: he confronts the security guard who has attempted to turn him away and attains control of the space (land). Second, he resists authority and power, represented here by the film crew and Costa in particular. This instance is charged with racial signifiers: Daniel points to Costa's lack of understanding and sympathy with a "vos no entiendes, cara blanquita" (you don't

understand, white face), emphasising the hierarchical power structure based on race. He takes his resistance against authority further by assuming a leadership position and encouraging others who are waiting to be seen to support him. Going against Costa's request, Sebastián announces that everyone will be seen and asks the casting crew to give an audition to Daniel and his daughter. He is so fascinated by Daniel's revolutionary attitude that he casts him as Hatuey.

In a later scene, Daniel refuses to follow Costa's request to abandon his activism until the filming has been completed. Costa's character is constructed as budget-driven, and he takes decisions that will increase the profits or success of the film. Daniel, on the other hand, is driven by improving the living conditions in his town. When María asks him as part of the documentary what had motivated him to take the part, his confused reply is laughed at by other locals around him, who retort jokingly that his only motivation is the pay. Instead of constructing Daniel as money-driven, however, this scene establishes his financial needs. This adds weight to his actions later, when he turns down Costa's offer of money in exchange for stopping the protests. By doing so, Daniel refuses not only to accept Costa's authority but also to be complicit in the neoliberal practices that put profit above the locals' wellbeing. He tells Costa, "sin agua no hay vida, vos no entiendes" (without water, there is no life; you don't understand). Calling attention once more to Costa's lack of understanding, Daniel establishes two kinds of knowledge: that of Costa (symbolising neoliberal and colonial thought) and that of Daniel (as an example of indigenous thought).[1]

Despite the film's good intentions of exploring power dynamics, inequality and subjugation during colonial and neoliberal times, at its core it is still the story of a Spaniard (Costa) and the evolution of his character.[2] As Bollaín comments in the press kit, "[I]t was a priority to highlight Costa's personal journey, (...) the movie's emotional heart (and power) would arise from the conflict of these two prominent characters and from Costa's developing perception of Daniel's reality: a reality much harsher, much harder than his own." (Wild Bunch, 2010) As a consequence, the final scene transforms Costa into the

white saviour and leaves Daniel with no arc of his own, other than that of agreeing to accept help (and money).

Community and resistance

So far, this paper has shown that Daniel represents resistance against authority (the multinational in control of the water supply, the police, Costa), the colonial control of space (the audition queue, the town square where the demonstrations take place) and the neoliberal understanding of capitalism and labour as structures with more value than community and wellbeing. In the following paragraphs we discuss examples of resistance related to the coloniality aspects of gender and family, knowledge and subjectivity.

1 For Andrea M. Smith, Daniel is presented as the "noble savage", who "comes to embody the racionalised character type that often serves as the counterpoint to an indigenous multitude"; he is also "the complement and contract with the film's white saviour(s)" (Smith 2017, 324-325).

2 *También la lluvia* continues the contemporary Spanish film trend of looking at Spanish colonialism through a critical lens, as the film has a "conventional structure that gives priority to the point of view and voice of a Spanish white male protagonist; allowing, at most, an active role to a racialised secondary character" (Santaolalla 2005, 229, our translation).

Although not explored in depth, there are moments in the film that engage with questions of fatherhood, gender and family. Scant information is provided about the family lives of the film crew, but conversations between Costa and Antón establish that they are both divorced and have little contact with their children. They discuss this as a natural consequence of their line of work, implying that both Costa and Antón have sacrificed family relationships for their jobs. In contrast, the indigenous people of Cochabamba put their jobs and their lives at risk for their relations: the protests are justified by the need to provide water for their families. It is only logical that Costa's transformation comes when he rescues a child (Daniel's daughter Belén) and promises to look after her even from far away. Although this transformation connects Costa to the locals and characterises him as sympathetic, the film's resolution is problematic because it brings to the forefront the narrative of the white saviour, which is criticised by coloniality scholarship. Furthermore, his help comes in the form of money: both to bribe his way through to reach Belén during the

protests and to pay for her treatment. That a product of capitalism seems to be the solution to the interpersonal conflict between Costa and Daniel contradicts some of the aims of the film.

Another instance in which coloniality, family and resistance collide occurs during the scene that involves children being drowned. With characteristics that can be related to resistance in relation to coloniality of knowledge (culture, customs, values), the scene shows Sebastián being forced to accept that the value of the film is not above the value of the indigenous culture. In this scene, Sebastián explains the script to the actors-mothers and reassures them that dolls will be used to represent the children drowning so that their children's lives will not be put in danger. Despite this, the actors refuse to film the scene. After discussing the scene with Daniel in Quechua, the actors abandon the film location. Sebastián expresses "passion for the project" (Bondi 2016, 277), but "manifests these emotions through his movie scenes rather than the actual people" (2016, 278). He directs his empathy at the romanticised "Indians" of the historical accounts, and is unable to demonstrate the same understanding of contemporary local indigenous people. As Paszkiewicz (2012, 233-234) argues, this scene exemplifies the intersection between Mulvey's *male gaze* and Kaplan's *imperial gaze*, *othering* the women on two levels.

While Daniel is the main representative of resistance in the film, there are moments of collective opposition to authority and the multinationals. Examples include deciding to buy a well and lay seven kilometres of pipes to transport the water to their families; burning water bills during the protests; and attacking the water company's building. As the final demonstrations take place, the city is turned into a battleground. A 360-degree pan shot around Costa shows the viewer the impact that the conflict has had on the city.[3]

The participatory approach to resistance is evident in the scene portraying a democratic debate between the locals on the next steps for the protests. Men and women intervene using Spanish and Quechua, which is not subtitled. Here, the use of the word *compañeros* reinforces the sense of community spirit and communal resistance. This echoes a similar scene in *Land and Freedom* (Ken Loach, 1995), where the left-wing militia and the International Brigades have a

debate about land collectivisation with urban peasants in the midst of the Spanish Civil War. The influence of this scene on *También la lluvia* cannot be dismissed, as the director (Icíar Bollaín) and the screenwriter (Paul Laverty) were both actors in it.

Colonial symbols and delinking

Lastly, a symbolic element of resistance through devaluing old colonial signifiers is the abandonment of the warehouse and the film props that it contained: the cross, the *carabela* or ship in which Columbus arrived, old ropes, and the documents related to the script and storyboard. The ropes represent oppression and the ship is a symbol of Columbus' arrival, but how the other items are connected with coloniality may be less evident. The cross appears in the film as a symbol of Christianity; thus, it is what Mignolo (2007, 460) describes as colonial

3 As noted by Saskia Sassen (2013, 67) on global cities, the city becomes "a strategic frontier zone", a space "where the powerless can make history even when they do not get empowered."

"knowledge and subjectivity". However, it is also a representation of the colonial enterprise in itself. It connects ideas of empire (in this case, Spanish) with the neoliberal practices of the water company and the film industry. The connection can also be established through links with the opening scene of *La dolce vita* (Fellini, 1960), which shows a golden statue of Christ being flown over Rome by helicopter. The camera follows the statue, which is also to be used as a film prop, connecting ideas of the Roman Empire and its culture with the concept of a Rome in ruins. In both films, a Christian symbol of devotion is carried by a mode of transport that represents modernity, displacing religious connotations and supporting the idea of capital as a modern god. Fellini and Bollain's films look at the glory of the past and the morally corrupt present, particularly in relation to money, celebrity status and an inability to connect emotionally. Furthermore, in *También la Lluvia*, the locals are tasked to erect the cross in unsafe conditions, which links notions of Christianity and exploitation.

Also related to knowledge, the script and storyboard are closely connected to Eurocentric thought, given that Sebastián's selection of texts relies exclusively on European accounts of the expedition. As a

"cinematic historian" (Redzinski 2017, 136), "he is actively engaged in the construction of history" (2017, 136). Yet he is unaware that he is "imposing his own culturally determined interpretation upon those texts as well as upon the very group whose memory he wishes to liberate" (Weiser 2015, 280). With the pages damaged and scattered over the floor, European knowledge is visually discarded; but this also represents European thought being left behind even after the Europeans have departed. Symbolically, in the scene at the end of the film where Costa finds these items, Daniel offers him a small parcel as a parting gift. Given that the sequence represents the completion of Costa's character arc and his transformation, Daniel's gift can be understood as delinked knowledge. The parcel is made of natural products – a wooden box and a leather ribbon – and contains a small glass bottle of water. Smiling, Costa says out loud "Yaku" (water), as if reading the message that Daniel has given him. Daniel is using his own language and understanding of the world to express gratitude to Costa, delinking the cultural mode of production. In the final sequence, a reversal of the opening scene in which Costa was driving, Costa leaves in a taxi. He is looking out of the window as the taxi driver, a local, stares at him in the rear-view mirror. In this game of gazes, Costa is the one whom the audience looks upon: the one who has transformed himself after allowing himself to see (and perceive) the inequalities around him and the series of "expulsions" and "inclusions" (Sassen, 2014) that derive from these power dynamics.

Language as resistance

Multilingual hybrid textual conventions have emerged from the increasing linguistic and cultural exchanges that take place, physically and virtually, in communities around the world. This process has gathered speed with new migration flows (local, national and international) and the explosion of digital and virtual transnational communication exchange (Castells, 2009). As noted by Herrero (forthcoming), the plurilingual component in filmmaking has attracted more attention since the publication of an outstanding article by Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (1985), "Cinema After Babel: Language, Difference, Power". An excellent example of this trend is *The*

Multilingual Screen: New Reflections on Cinema and Linguistic Difference, a volume edited by Tijana Mamula and Lisa Patti (2016, 1-2), which "advocates the opening of film studies to a broader appreciation of the ways in which linguistic difference has shaped, and continues to shape, the medium's history". A line of enquiry in this field is the role of language diversity in films. For example, Tessa Dwyer (2005) argues that polyglot films are defined by the naturalistic presence of two or more languages at the level of dialogue and narrative. Similarly, Chris Wahl maintains that multilingualism is not simply a decorative component, but plays a central role in the narrative of contemporary films. Analysing the polyglot film, he states that it "respects the cultural 'aura' and the individual voices of the actors, delivers on a verbal level a naturalistic depiction of the characters, but often has an articulately disillusioning effect because of the use of subtitles" (Wahl 2008, 338).[4] In the case of Bollaín's film, the strategy employed was not to use subtitles when Quechua was spoken. This approach places viewers in the same position as the film crew and the *colonizadores*, making them aware of the linguistic displacement imposed on the indigenous population.

4 Chris Wahl (2008) has developed a taxonomy of subgenres for polyglot film: existential, globalisation, migration, colonisation and fraternisation. Rather than belonging to one category, *También la lluvia* is an example of a polyglot film that remixes several subgenres.

The film also conforms to one of its key principles, "the representation of language diversity as its protagonists experience it" (Berger and Komori 2010, 9). The multilingual component in *También la lluvia* contributes to the "realistic" portrayal of the story and characters and defines ethnic borders. Furthermore, it visualises "the different social, personal or cultural levels of the characters and enrich[es] their aura in conjunction with the voice" (Wahl 2005, 2). Daniel is a multilingual speaker: he speaks Quechua and is fluent in Spanish and English. His translingual ability makes him a superior figure and strengthens his authority.[5] It enables him to be the mediator between members of the film crew and the indigenous community; for example, when the Quechuan-speaking women do not respond to Sebastián's commands during the shooting of the river scene.

We can argue that language is a mode of resistance and a contra-power instrument. Gemma King in *Decentring France: Multilingualism and Power in Contemporary French Cinema*, has noted the function of multilingualism as a "crucial narrative element, a tool and a strategy for wresting, maintaining and redistributing power among the characters" (2017, 27). *También la lluvia* recognises the multilingual tapestry of Bolivia; it does not try to conceal the country's language diversity. However, by staging the film in Spanish, it reveals the preponderance of Spanish as a lingua franca and signposts the use of language as a colonial and neocolonial tool of dominance. At the same time, a simulacrum and lack of authenticity are revealed, as the language spoken by the extras is Quechua instead of Taíno.

In his analysis of the power opacity that has characterised European governments since the 2010 Greek crisis, Enrique Gil Calvo (2013) examines three discursive and performative strategies for visualising power and contra-power narratives: storytelling, framing and performances. Icíar Bollaín's film offers compelling samples of speech acts that ground power and contra-power actions. In this paper, we confine our analysis to performative instruments related to words and discourses. In *También la lluvia* the performative power of public discourse is exerted to legitimise authorities in power. Discourse linked to the institutional order occurs during the script-reading scene, when Antón recites a speech by Colón that established the authority of Castille and Aragon to claim the lands

5 The term *translingual* draws attention to the multilingual realities of people communicating across languages. See Canagarajah (2013) and García and Wei (2014).

and riches of the "Indias". However, there are more cases of contra-power discourses. One instance of this is the scene in which Bartolomé de las Casas' sermon condemns the Spaniards' cruel treatment of the indigenous communities. Nevertheless, the actors highlight the hypocrisy of de las Casas' position by discussing the fact that he never questioned the authority of the Spaniards over the land of the "New World". There are also some examples of contra-power discourse that aims to create conflict and change the institutional order, such as Daniel's speech during the street demonstration and Hatuey's speech before he is executed by the Spaniards. These can be

considered, as in the case of de las Casas' sermon, examples of "infamous speech" (Gil Calvo 2013, 203-207).

Water and empowerment

There are numerous critical analyses of neoliberal policies that have triggered outrage and movements demanding better living conditions in the 21st century. The Cochabamba Water Wars were a prelude to the riots, protests, parades and revolts that broke out in city squares across North Africa, the Middle East, Spain, Portugal, Greece and the United States. In Bolivia, the discrimination has resulted in growing inequality. As noted by Ernesto Ottone (2012, 294), in Bolivia "the identity concept is strongly present in the political discourse" due to the diverse and complex identities of the indigenous communities.

In *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy*, Sassen (2014, 89) argues that in the developing world, debt and debt-servicing problems have been used "to reorganize a political economy" and destroy traditional economies in rural areas in order to serve "the new needs of advanced capitalism, notably land for plantation agriculture and for access to water, metals, and minerals". As pointed out by Andrea Meador Smith (2017), the Cochabamba Water Wars are considered by many as a significant example of neo-colonialism and the tensions created by local, national and transnational agents when the privatisation of water is supported by international financial institutions (in this case, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank).

In many parts of the country, a critical priority is to improve the water supply. Particularly relevant for this paper is to explore the implications of local traditions on the water crisis in Bolivia. Thomas Kruse (2005) has observed that this complex network of history, culture, organisations, concepts and practices was used as a banner for resistance, expressing community arguments through shared symbols and slogans ("el agua es nuestra" –the water belongs to us–) and citizenparticipatory strategies revolving around two basic needs: dignity and access to water.

The relevance of water is reflected by the film in its title (*Even the Rain*), the use of the slogan "the water belongs to us" during the

demonstrations, and its critical view on wasting a scarce resource. While the film crew is often connected to visuals of wasting water, the indigenous locals are visually connected to its preservation. The script-reading session in the hotel takes place next to a swimming pool that is never used, and in the hotel scene with Costa and Antón a bucket of ice is visible in almost every shot. In stark contrast, the indigenous locals are depicted laying pipes to connect their recently acquired well to their neighbourhood seven kilometres away. The film crew is frequently seen drinking or ordering alcohol, keeping (unused) ice cubes in their rooms to cool their alcoholic drinks. The crew's disregard for the value of water contrasts with the indigenous citizens' difficulties in paying for it.

The access to water for lucrative purposes as envisaged by the Bechtel Corporation is in total opposition to the indigenous cosmovision and cultural values attached to water in Bolivia. As noted by Óscar Olivera, leader of the Cochabamba social insurrection, in Bolivia water is considered a gift from the goddess Pachamama and nobody has the right to appropriate this natural good (Casa de América, 2011). The connection to the gods is visually emphasised during the opening credits: the grey clouds, filled with rain, serve as a background for the cross as it is flown over Cochabamba.

Also revealing the sacred value of water is the scene in which Sebastián asks the actors-mothers to drown their children before the dogs attack them, and the women refuse to follow his instructions. This is not because they do not understand what they are being asked, but because water is a symbol of life and not death in their culture. As interpreter and intercultural mediator, Daniel offers a simple but ambiguous explanation: "hay cosas más importantes que tu película" (some things are more important than your film). In this regard, Erika Bondi (2016, 277) argues that "[a]lthough his [Sebastián] emotives reflect his liberal sentiment for justice, his actions do not". The lack of intercultural understanding displayed by Sebastián in this scene is symbolically foreshadowed when he reads his own script on his way to the shooting location. Sebastián is framed in a close up. He fills only half of the shot; the other half is the (closed) car window, which is covered in raindrops. It is not raining outside the car; these drops are

remnants of previous rain, valuable but wasted water that has fallen on a symbol of modernity. Sebastián (and the audience) looks through the raindrops, until eventually the gaze passes through them to focus on a forest landscape. Sebastián ignores the rain that disrupts the window, the rain that evokes the current indigenous plight. Instead, he daydreams about his script and imagines a past dog-chase sequence, shifting uncomfortably on his seat when he pictures one of the dogs reaching an indigenous woman.

In this way, Sebastián is constructed as being out of touch with the plight of the contemporary indigenous population, despite his emotional connection to the indigenous communities of the past. The cinematography emphasises Sebastián's disconnection from the realities that surround him and redirects his concern to past suffering. Towards the end, when the film crew decides to leave the country, Sebastián observes in silence as Antón offers a can of beer to a group of detained protesters. This scene reinforces Sebastián's passiveness and disconnection. He is shown sitting next to a cactus in a semi-desert landscape just above the road, contrasting with Antón's sympathetic gesture and involvement. Smiling as if touched by Antón's action, Sebastián looks away and remains on the ground, uninvolved.

As mentioned previously, at the end of the film, Daniel gives Costa as a parting gift a box with a small bottle of water (*yaku*): the symbol of their struggle, their lives and their friendship. Daniel is expressing his gratitude for saving his daughter's life, while putting the water on the same symbolic level. The gift evokes Daniel's previous affirmation that "water is life". It also emphasises Daniel's agency: he is the donor of water in this scene. This symbolises the success of the activism that overturned the decision to privatise the water supply. Although this ending may undermine the film's message, the happy ending prompts the audience to connect sympathetically with the plight of the film's characters on a deeper level. As Austin (2017, 314) notes, despite the seemingly satisfying conclusion, the "yaku in Costa's hand is too neatly packaged to present a real solution to the complex situation the film describes". Thus, rather than bringing a resolution, the film's ending offers the audience a new set of questions about the future of

Cochabamba and the ability of the film crew to return to their homelands.

Conclusion

Bollaín's film aims to involve audiences[6] in a self-reflective way of understanding colonialism, coloniality and its pervasive nature under neoliberal structures. By engaging with film discourse on three levels, the film also exposes issues of authenticity and neutrality that are often associated with documentary and historical films. This questioning of authenticity brings to the screen an opportunity to re-evaluate the role of the colonisers and the depiction of the colonised in historical texts. The fact that the film crew does not see the continuity of colonialism injustices leads the audience to the uncomfortable position of facing their own ignorance in order to elicit an empathetic response. Thus, the film offers a narrative that connects colonialism with neoliberal practices through the concept of coloniality of power (Quijano 2000).

Despite the portrayal of Costa as a white saviour towards the end of the film, this does not minimise Daniel's potential for resistance in the narrative. As an embodiment of opposition and delinking thought, Daniel exemplifies modes of resistance against coloniality and Eurocentrism that go beyond his role as an activist in the Water Wars. He is shown as the leader of the protests, and his casting as Hatuey reinforces the meanings of resistance and revolution associated with the Taíno chieftain.

Although resistance against practices of coloniality is embodied in the character of Daniel/Hatuey, this is not exclusive to his character arc. Elements of the mise en scène (such as historical documents, the cross and the ship) represent moments of tension in the narrative and are abandoned in the warehouse at the end. The use of language creates space for self-determination and the preservation of indigenous identity. Multilingualism, exemplified in Daniel's translingual competence, is a mark of globalization and a contra-power instrument. Finally, the struggle against privatisation makes water a contested resource throughout the narrative. This divides the characters into three

6 We use the term *audiences*, in plural, to refer to different audience groups (given the transnational scope of this film), in line with scholarship on audience research. See, for example, Donald and Renov (2008).

groups: those who want to appropriate the water (or who facilitate its appropriation), those who fight for it, and those who do not appreciate its value (i.e. the film crew). In this context, Costa's acknowledgement of the gift in Quechua is significant, as it demonstrates a symbolic understanding of its role in the community.

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